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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [VZ](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: GOC PEACE COMMISSIONER REVIEWS LATEST DEVELOPMENTS
ON HUMANITARIAN EXCHANGE

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Defense Minister Santos voiced skepticism about the efforts of President Chavez and Senator Cordoba to facilitate a humanitarian exchange with the FARC, prompting a rebuke from President Uribe. GOC Peace Commissioner Restrepo told us Uribe was chagrined with Santos' remarks, because at the October 12 Uribe-Chavez meeting, Chavez and Cordoba agreed not to speak publicly about their efforts or to involve additional international actors. Santos' comments violated both commitments. French diplomat Daniel Parfait told Restrepo he thinks the USG would exchange "Simon" and "Sonia" as part of an exchange. Restrepo said the GOC now believes a Cordoba meeting with the Secretary would send the wrong signal. The ELN process remains frozen. End Summary

¶2. (U) On October 18, the Presidential Palace issued a statement reaffirming GOC support for the efforts of Venezuelan President Chavez and Senator Cordoba to facilitate a humanitarian accord with the FARC and urging "all GOC officials to abstain from making public or private comments" on the process. The statement was prompted by Defense Minister Santos' statement at the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington, D.C. earlier that day voicing skepticism about Chavez' and Cordoba's roles. President Uribe also rejected Santos' remarks, but called him a "great person" who would remain in his job.

¶3. (C) Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo told us October 19 that President Uribe was chagrined by Santos' comments because at the October 12 Uribe-Chavez summit in La Guajira, Uribe had extracted promises from both Chavez and Cordoba not to speak publicly on the humanitarian accord. Uribe also received assurances that they would not continue to try to involve other international actors. Santos' comments in Washington violated both commitments.

¶4. (C) Restrepo said that at the summit, Uribe agreed not to continue to insist that the GOC be present at a

Chavez/Cordoba meeting with the FARC. Chavez had claimed the planned October 8 meeting with FARC was postponed, in part, because of Restrepo's plan to be in Caracas at same time. Restrepo said Chavez really seemed to believe he could convince the FARC that, following his example, the way to power is through the ballot box, not armed struggle. This is what Chavez means when he says he wants to talk "geopolitics" with FARC leader Marulanda.

15. (C) Restrepo said he doubts FARC Secretariat members Mono Jojoy, Raul Reyes, or Ivan Marquez will meet with Chavez in Caracas. Colombian intelligence indicates that media speculation on who will attend for the FARC reflects FARC infighting; FARC members who think Marquez is too close to Chavez' Bolivarian Movement proposed Jojoy as a blocking move. Restrepo speculated that the Secretariat would likely send three lower-level officials (Antonio Losada, Fabian Ramirez, and Felipe Rincon) to represent it in talks on a humanitarian exchange. He said FARC participation below the Secretariat level would be a blow to Chavez.

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16. (C) Restrepo said he reiterated to Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro on October 9 and 11 in Caracas that the GOC would insist that the three Americans held by the FARC be included in any humanitarian exchange. That position, he added, did not imply that the USG would consider a trade involving "Simon Trinidad" and "Sonia." Maduro told Restrepo he had received a similar message from WHA A/S Shannon.

17. (C) On October 6, French MFA Latin American Affairs Director Daniel Parfait suggested to Restrepo that the USG had changed its policy and would consider the release of

"Sonia" and "Simon" as part of a deal. Parfait attached great importance to the Cordoba-Pelosi photo, arguing that the humanitarian accord was becoming a political issue in the United States. A photo of Cordoba with Secretary Rice would be another sign that U.S. policy has changed, Parfait claimed. Restrepo said Parfait's interpretation indicated the FARC is gaining international traction with the French, Venezuelans, and the USG. If this was the case, Restrepo asked, why would the FARC agree to meet with the GOC? Based on Parfait's comments, Restrepo told us the GOC no longer thinks that a Cordoba-Rice meeting would be useful.

18. (C) Restrepo said the ELN process is frozen; the GOC has heard nothing from the group in weeks. He understands the ELN's Central Committee (COCE) will meet with Chavez in Caracas after the October 28 local elections in Colombia to discuss next steps. Still, he believes ELN leaders will not take any decisions until they see how things play out with the FARC and the humanitarian exchange. More radical elements within ELN continue to push for a rapprochement with the FARC rather than a deal with the GOC, he added.

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